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FABLES

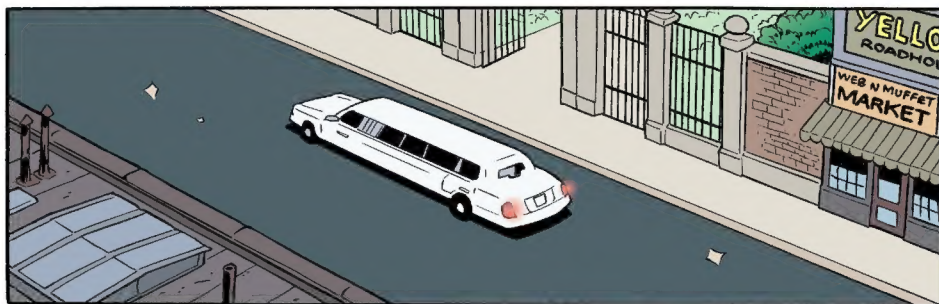
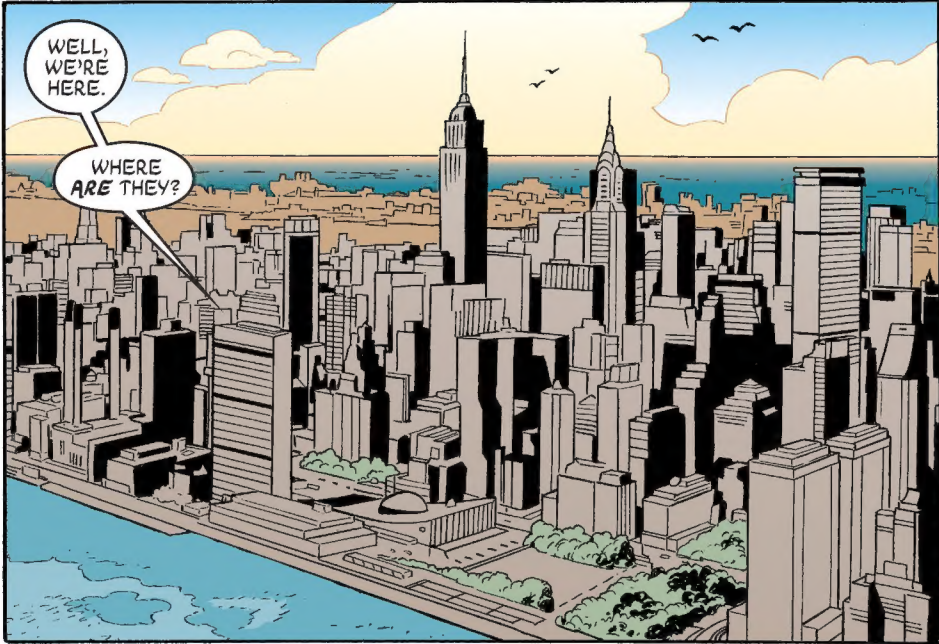
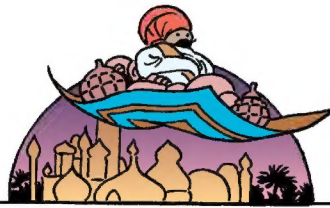
**ARABIAN
NIGHTS**
(and DAYS)
PART
1

No. 42
Dec 05

SUGGESTED FOR
MATURE READERS
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BILL WILLINGHAM • MARK BUCKINGHAM • STEVE LEIALOHA





BROKEN ENGLISH

— Chapter ONE of — Arabian Nights (and Days)

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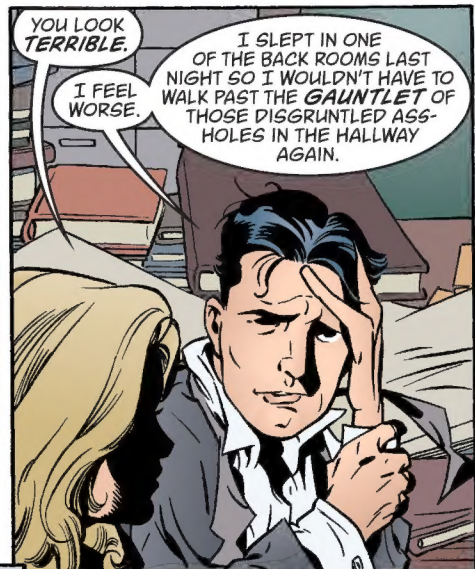
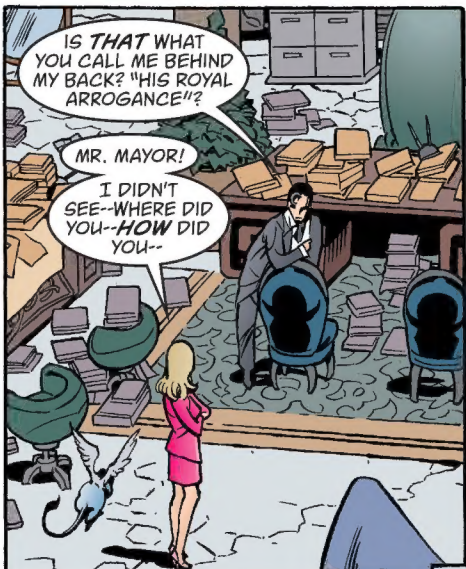
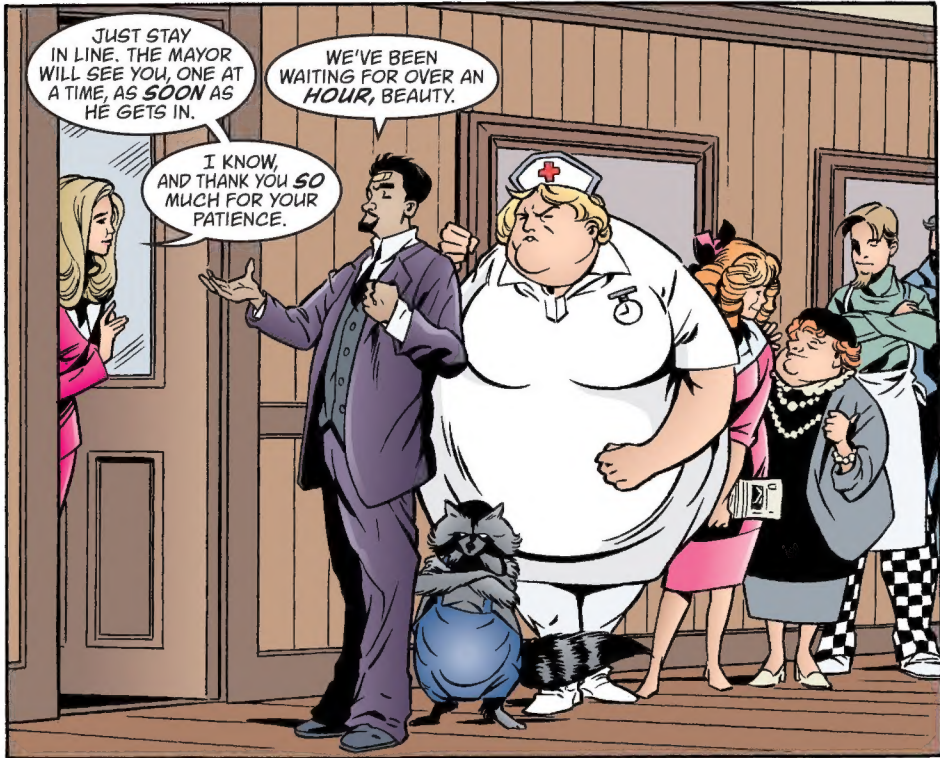
TODD
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SHELLY
BOND:
EDITOR









DID YOU HEAR WHAT THEY CALLED ME YESTERDAY?

YES, SIR, BUT YOU *STILL* HAVE TO SEE EACH AND EVERY ONE OF THEM AGAIN TODAY, AND TOMORROW, AND FOR AS LONG AS THEY CONTINUE TO LINE UP OUT THERE.

IF YOU DON'T, MY HUSBAND WON'T BE ABLE TO CONTROL THE OUTCOME.

I KNOW. SEND THE FIRST ASSASSIN IN.

UTILITIES IN OUR BUILDING ARE BREAKING DOWN. THE HEAT WENT OUT *TWICE* LAST WINTER, AND YOU HAVE THE UNMITIGATED GALL TO RAISE OUR RENTS AGAIN?

BEAR WITH US. WE'RE WORKING ON IT.

WE *STILL* DON'T HAVE THE ENCHANTMENTS YOU PROMISED US!

AS YOU'VE REMINDED ME EACH AND EVERY DAY FOR THE PAST THREE WEEKS. MEANWHILE, YOU'RE MAKING A BLOODY MESS OUT OF YOUR *VIP* SUITE.

DO YOU HAVE ANY IDEA WHAT THE *TOILET* IS THERE FOR?

DRINKING WATER, OF COURSE!

YOU'RE TWO MONTHS BEHIND ON OUR HOSPITAL *FINANCING* ALLOTMENT! WE PROVIDE *VITAL* SERVICES TO FABLE-TOWN THAT ARE IN DANGER OF GOING AWAY!

I'LL LOOK INTO IT FIRST THING, MRS. SPRAT. PROMISE.

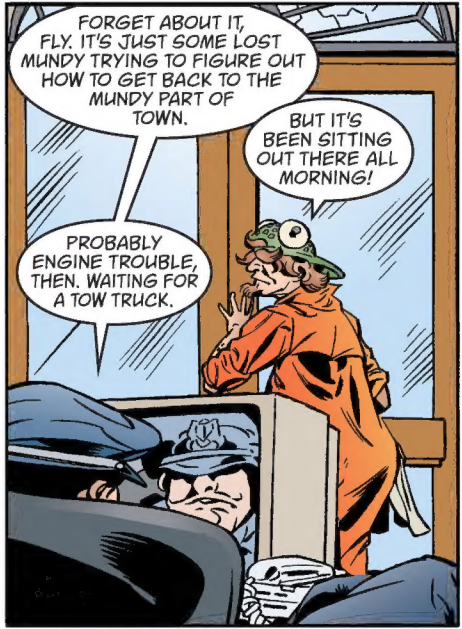


SO WE'RE JUST GOING TO CONTINUE TO SIT HERE, MASTER?

I REFUSE TO STEP OUTSIDE UNTIL SOMEONE GREET'S US! ARE WE PEASANTS TO JUST WANDER UP TO THEIR DOOR AND KNOCK?



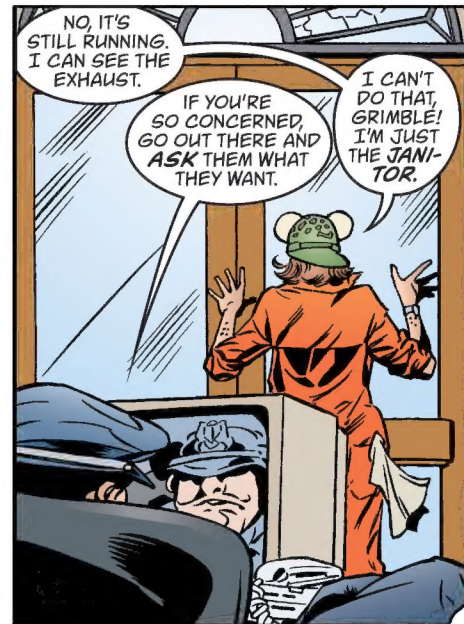
IT'S STILL OUT THERE, GRIMBLE.



FORGET ABOUT IT, FLY. IT'S JUST SOME LOST MUNDY TRYING TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO GET BACK TO THE MUNDY PART OF TOWN.

BUT IT'S BEEN SITTING OUT THERE ALL MORNING!

PROBABLY ENGINE TROUBLE, THEN. WAITING FOR A TOW TRUCK.



NO, IT'S STILL RUNNING. I CAN SEE THE EXHAUST.

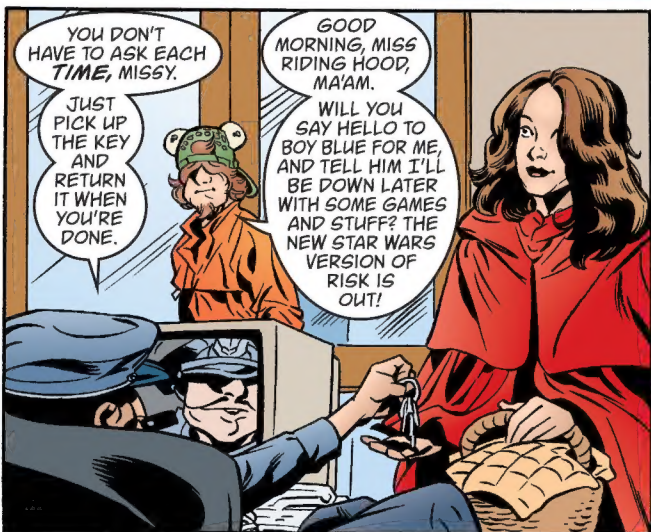
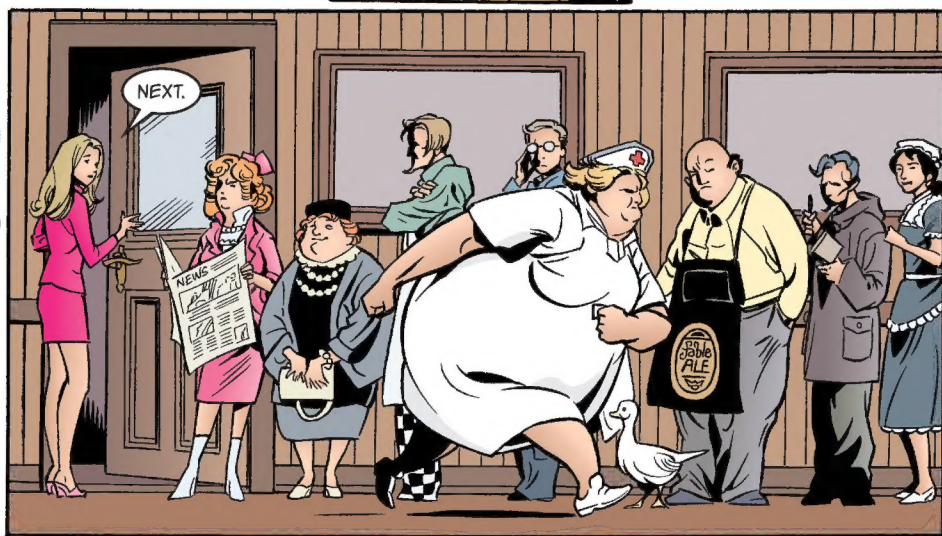
IF YOU'RE SO CONCERNED, GO OUT THERE AND ASK THEM WHAT THEY WANT.

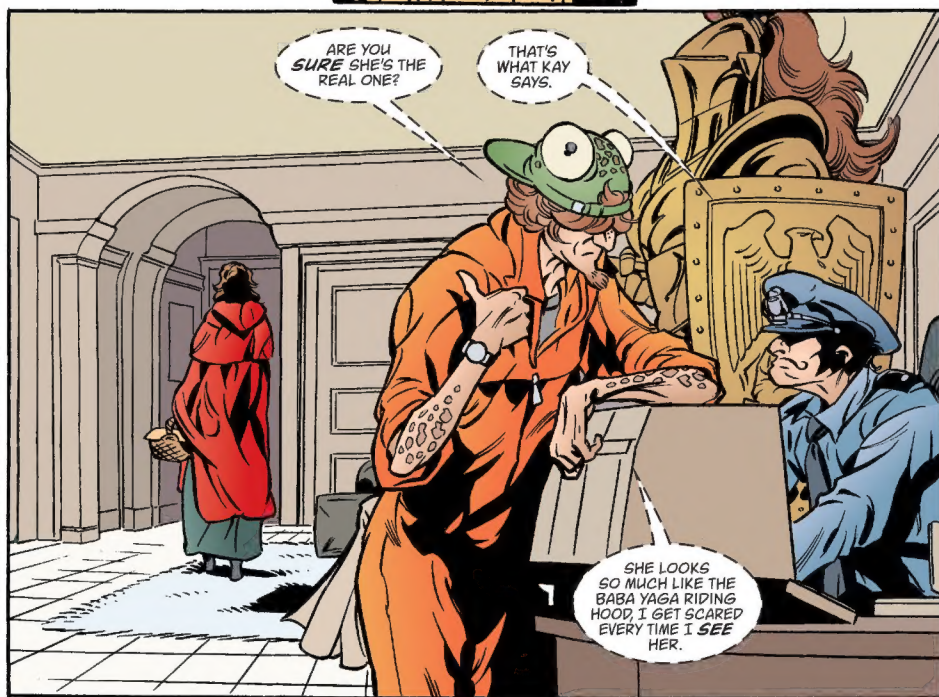
I CAN'T DO THAT, GRIMBLE! I'M JUST THE JANITOR.



WELL, MY JURISDICTION AND AUTHORITY ENDS AT THE FRONT GATE. GO GET THE SHERIFF IF YOU'RE TOO TIMID TO CHECK IT YOURSELF.

I WISH TRUSTY JOHN WAS STILL HERE. HE'D KNOW WHAT TO DO.





ARE YOU SURE SHE'S THE REAL ONE?

THAT'S WHAT KAY SAYS.

SHE LOOKS SO MUCH LIKE THE BABA YAGA RIDING HOOD, I GET SCARED EVERY TIME I SEE HER.



DARN IT ALL, GRIMBLE! IF MY BUDDY BLUE CAN GO ALONE BACK TO THE HOMELANDS TO RESCUE HIS SWEETHEART, I CAN BE BRAVE TOO!



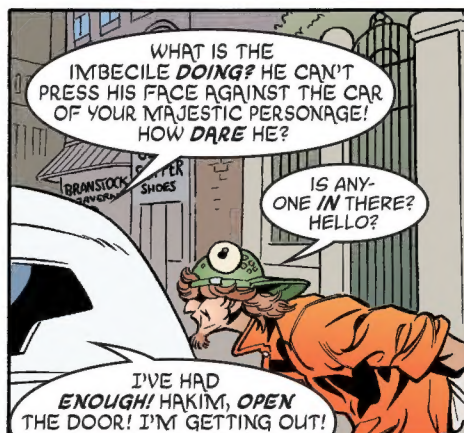
I'M GOING OUT TO SEE JUST WHO THESE SO-AND-SO'S THINK THEY ARE!



SOME-ONE'S COMING, MASTER.

FINALLY.

HELLO?



WHAT IS THE IMBECILE DOING? HE CAN'T PRESS HIS FACE AGAINST THE CAR OF YOUR MAJESTIC PERSONAGE! HOW DARE HE?

IS ANY-ONE IN THERE? HELLO?

I'VE HAD ENOUGH! HAKIMI, OPEN THE DOOR! I'M GETTING OUT!



YES, MASTER--OH MOST EXALTED OF ALLAH'S SERVANTS.

UH OH.



WHO ARE YOU, WESTERN DOG, AND WHY ARE YOU THE ONLY ONE HERE TO GREET ME?

WHERE ARE THE COURTIER AND WAZIRS AND SUNDRY GRANDEES OF HIGH OFFICE?



UH...I'M SORRY, MISTER, BUT I CAN'T UNDERSTAND A WORD YOU'RE SAYING.

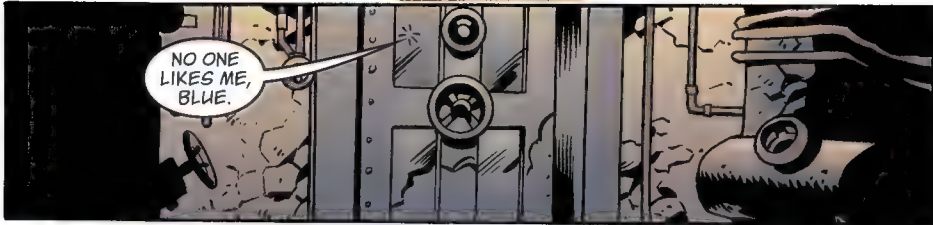


AND WHERE ARE THE SUMPTUOUS GIFTS BEFITTING AN ENVOY OF YOUR STATURE, SIRRAH?

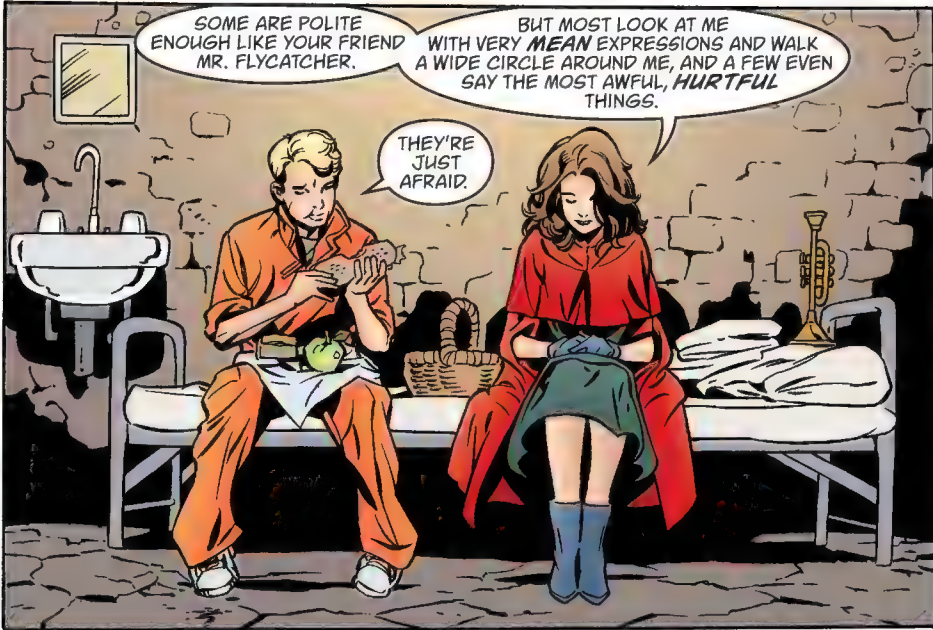
CAN THIS BE FABLETOWN? IT LOOKS LIKE A SLUM--A GHETTO, FOR THE HOUSING OF PEASANTS AND THE LICE-INFESTED SCUM OF THE LOWER CASTES.

DO ANY OF YOU SPEAK ENGLISH?





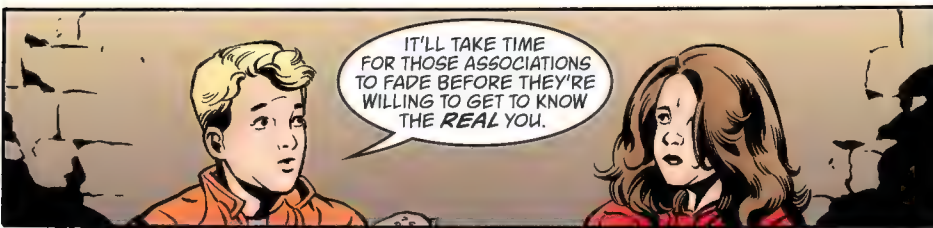
NO ONE LIKES ME, BLUE.



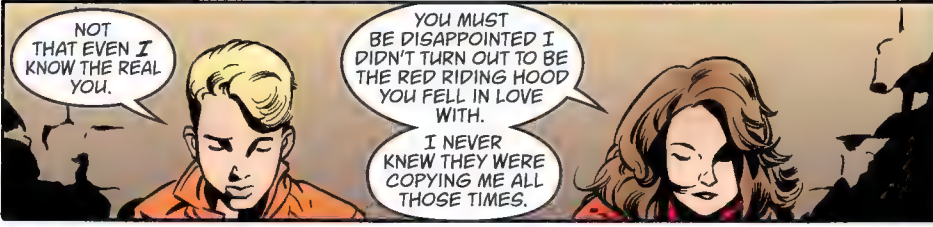
SOME ARE POLITE ENOUGH LIKE YOUR FRIEND MR. FLYCATCHER.

BUT MOST LOOK AT ME WITH VERY **MEAN** EXPRESSIONS AND WALK A WIDE CIRCLE AROUND ME, AND A FEW EVEN SAY THE MOST AWFUL, **HURTFUL** THINGS.

THEY'RE JUST AFRAID.



IT'LL TAKE TIME FOR THOSE ASSOCIATIONS TO FADE BEFORE THEY'RE WILLING TO GET TO KNOW THE **REAL** YOU.



NOT THAT EVEN I KNOW THE REAL YOU.

YOU MUST BE DISAPPOINTED I DIDN'T TURN OUT TO BE THE RED RIDING HOOD YOU FELL IN LOVE WITH.

I NEVER KNEW THEY WERE COPYING ME ALL THOSE TIMES.



THAT'S NOT **YOUR** FAULT. I'LL GET OVER IT.

I MISS MY COTTAGE ALONE IN THE WOODS.

SOMETIMES **YEARS** WOULD GO BY WITHOUT ANYONE BOTHERING ME.



UNDERSTAND... LOUDLY... RADIO... CUPCAKE... PERSONS!

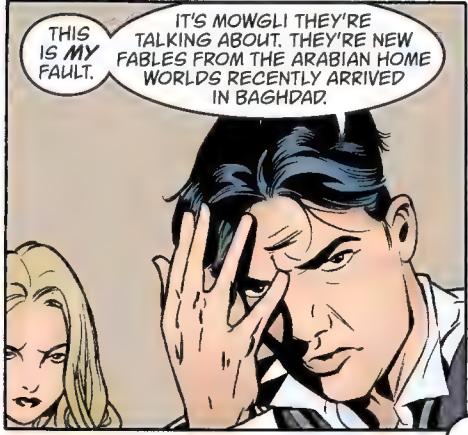
JUNGLE... GIRL... SINBAD... MEET... LAVENDER... RAKE... FABLETOWN... NOW!

YEAH, I UNDERSTAND THE PART WHERE THAT FELLOW IS SINBAD, BUT I DON'T GET THE JUNGLE GIRL THING!

WE DON'T HAVE ANY JUNGLE GIRLS HERE!

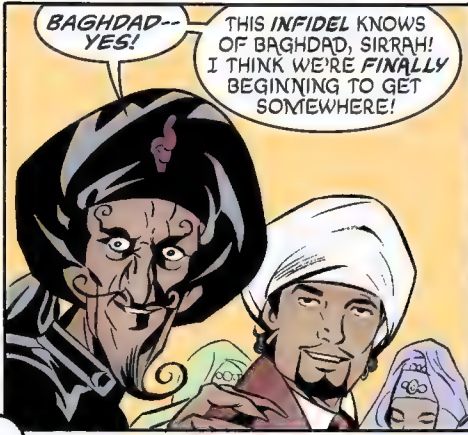
WE'RE FRESH OUT!

OH NO.



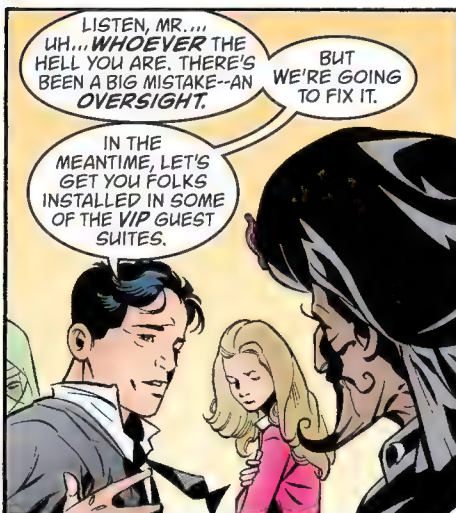
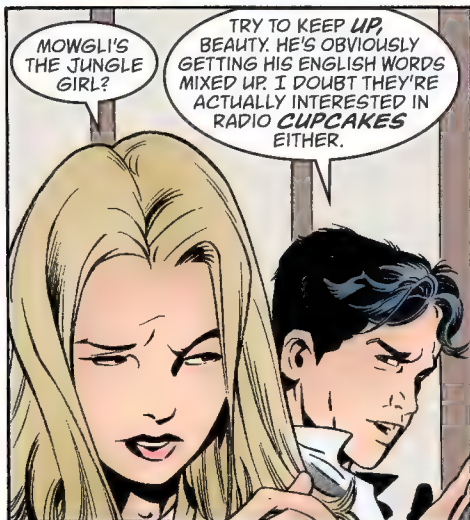
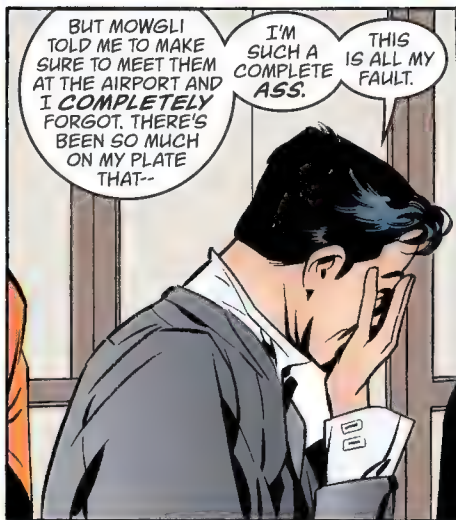
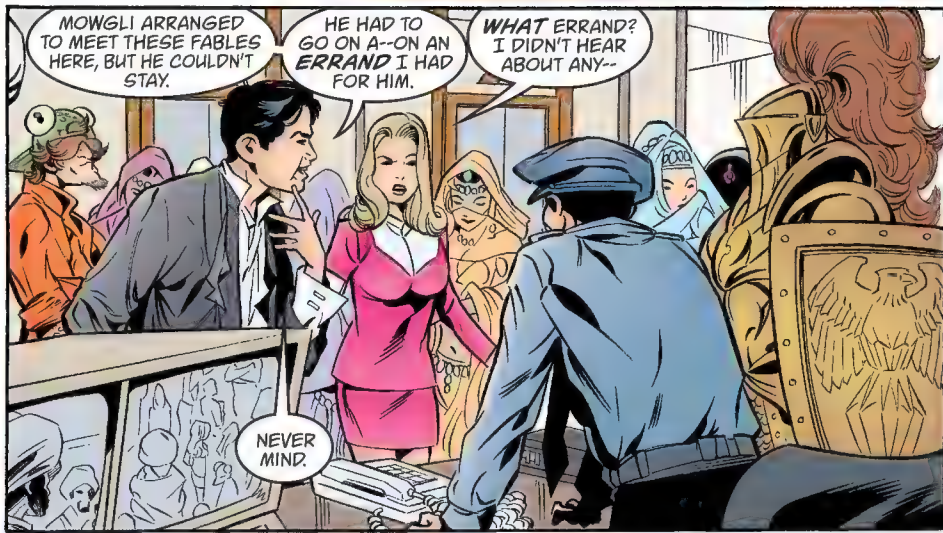
THIS IS MY FAULT.

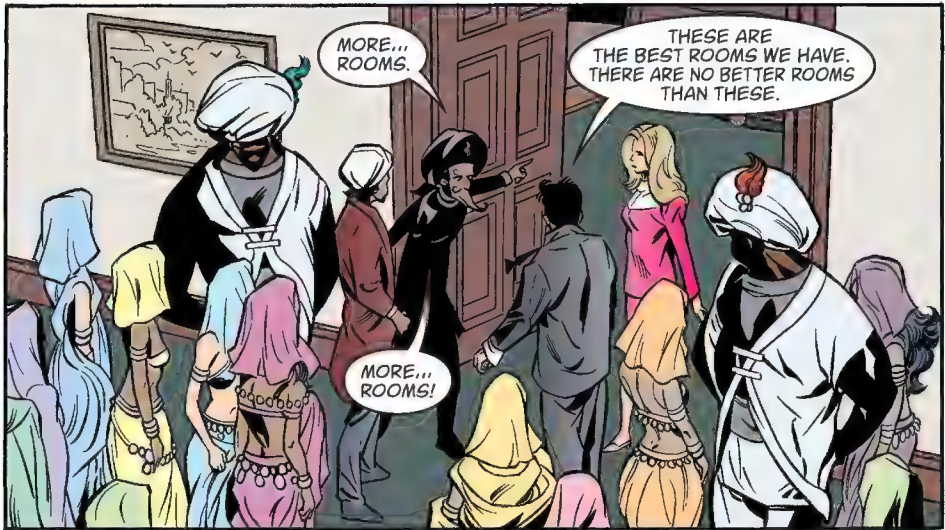
IT'S MOWGLI! THEY'RE TALKING ABOUT. THEY'RE NEW FABLES FROM THE ARABIAN HOME WORLDS RECENTLY ARRIVED IN BAGHDAD.



BAGHDAD-- YES!

THIS INFIDEL KNOWS OF BAGHDAD, SIRRAH! I THINK WE'RE FINALLY BEGINNING TO GET SOMEWHERE!





MORE... ROOMS.

THESE ARE THE BEST ROOMS WE HAVE. THERE ARE NO BETTER ROOMS THAN THESE.

MORE... ROOMS!



THIS... ROOMS... SINBAD.

MORE... CONNECTION... ROOMS... YUSUF.

MORE... CONNECTION... ROOMS... BLACKAMOR... GUARDS... SLAVES.

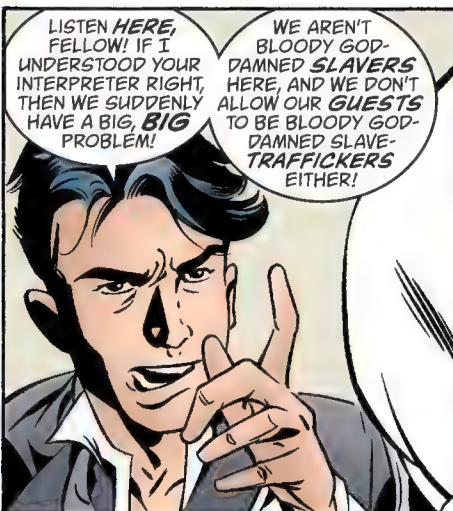
SLAVES?



MORE... ROOMS... WOMEN... SLAVES.

BOSS, DID HE JUST SAY THAT THE BLACK MEN AND THE WOMEN ARE ALL SLAVES?

I THINK SO!



LISTEN **HERE**, FELLOW! IF I UNDERSTOOD YOUR INTERPRETER RIGHT, THEN WE SUDDENLY HAVE A BIG, **BIG** PROBLEM!

WE AREN'T BLOODY GOD-DAMNED **SLAVERS** HERE, AND WE DON'T ALLOW OUR **GUESTS** TO BE BLOODY GOD-DAMNED **SLAVE-TRAFFICKERS** EITHER!



THESE INFIDELS ARE **INSANE!**

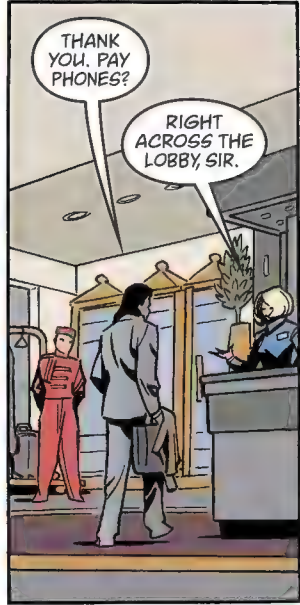


LONDON.

AND HE CHECKED OUT *WHEN?*

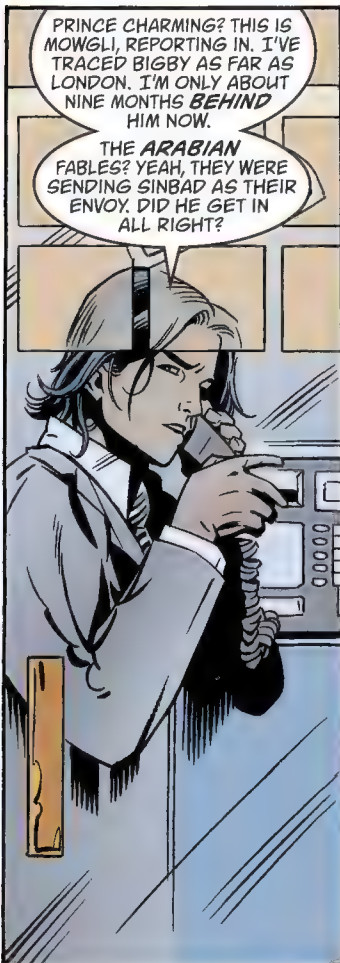


NOVEMBER 27TH, SIR. HE DIDN'T LEAVE A FORWARDING DESTINATION.



THANK YOU. PAY PHONES?

RIGHT ACROSS THE LOBBY, SIR.



PRINCE CHARMING? THIS IS MOWGLI, REPORTING IN. I'VE TRACED BIGBY AS FAR AS LONDON. I'M ONLY ABOUT NINE MONTHS *BEHIND* HIM NOW.

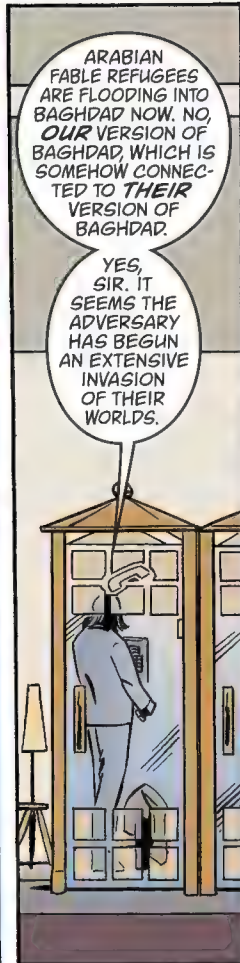
THE *ARABIAN* FABLES? YEAH, THEY WERE SENDING SINBAD AS THEIR ENVOY. DID HE GET IN ALL RIGHT?



THEY DID *WHAT?* AND YOU SAID *WHAT?*

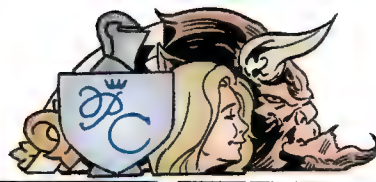
FORGIVE ME, SIR, BUT THAT'S A *DISASTER*. YOU *PROMISED* ME YOU'D--

BUT I SPENT SIX *MONTHS* NEGOTIATING THIS MEETING.



ARABIAN FABLE REFUGEES ARE FLOODING INTO BAGHDAD NOW. NO, *OUR* VERSION OF BAGHDAD, WHICH IS SOMEHOW CONNECTED TO *THEIR* VERSION OF BAGHDAD.

YES, SIR. IT SEEMS THE ADVERSARY HAS BEGUN AN EXTENSIVE INVASION OF THEIR WORLDS.



FABLETOWN.

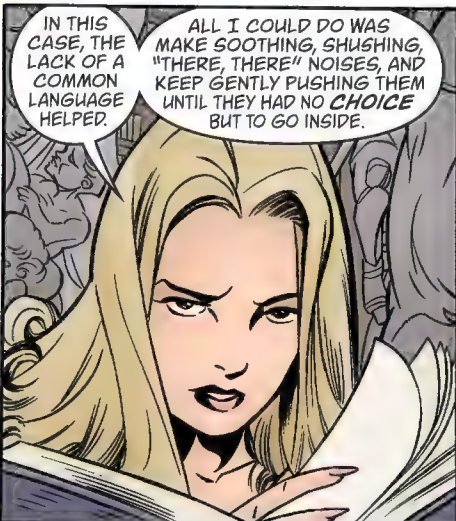
WELL, MOWGLI WAS **NO** HELP, OTHER THAN TO POINT OUT WHAT WE ALREADY KNOW.



THIS IS A DISASTER.

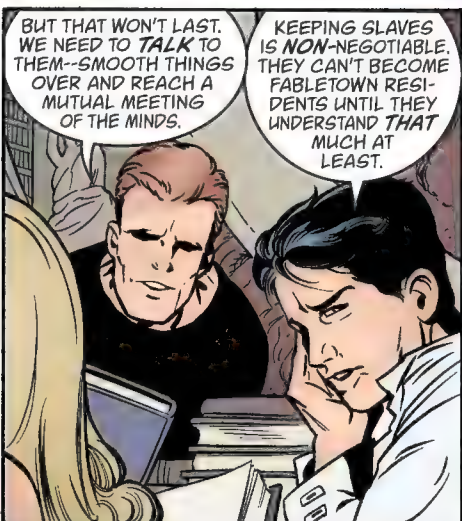
FOR A SECOND THERE I THOUGHT ONE OF THOSE BIG GUARDS WAS GOING TO TAKE YOUR **HEAD** OFF--RIGHT THERE IN THE HALLWAY.

THANK GOD YOU GOT THEM CALMED DOWN AND IN THEIR ROOMS, BEAUTY.



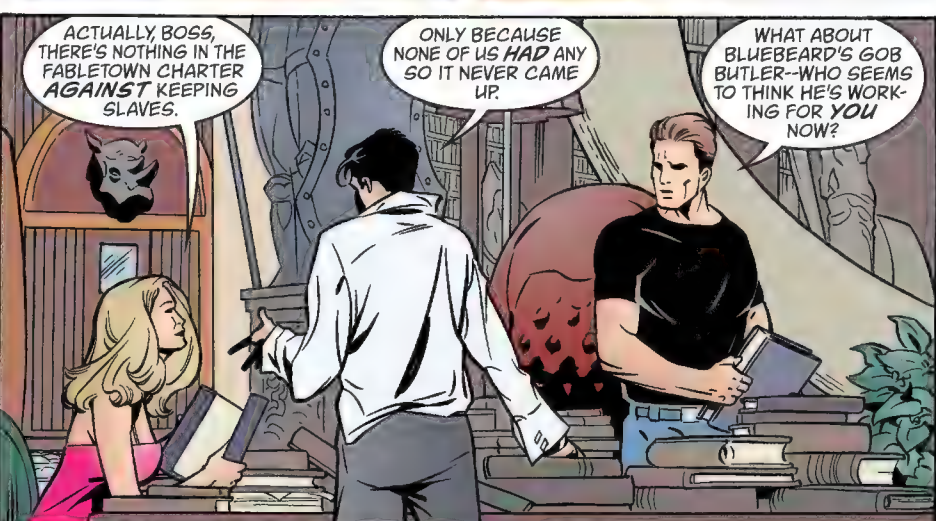
IN THIS CASE, THE LACK OF A COMMON LANGUAGE HELPED.

ALL I COULD DO WAS MAKE SOOTHING, SHUSHING, "THERE, THERE" NOISES, AND KEEP GENTLY PUSHING THEM UNTIL THEY HAD NO **CHOICE** BUT TO GO INSIDE.



BUT THAT WON'T LAST. WE NEED TO **TALK** TO THEM--SMOOTH THINGS OVER AND REACH A MUTUAL MEETING OF THE MINDS.

KEEPING SLAVES IS **NON-NEGOTIABLE**. THEY CAN'T BECOME FABLETOWN RESIDENTS UNTIL THEY UNDERSTAND THAT MUCH AT LEAST.



ACTUALLY, BOSS, THERE'S NOTHING IN THE FABLETOWN CHARTER **AGAINST** KEEPING SLAVES.

ONLY BECAUSE NONE OF US **HAD** ANY SO IT NEVER CAME UP.

WHAT ABOUT BLUEBEARD'S GOB BUTLER--WHO SEEMS TO THINK HE'S WORKING FOR **YOU** NOW?



HE WAS ON A LONG-TERM CONTRACT THAT WE DECIDED TO KEEP IN FORCE, FOR NOW. AND HE'S **QUITE** WELL PAID.

BELIEVE ME, HE MAKES MORE AS A **SERVANT** THAN I DO AS **MAYOR**.

CAN WE GET BACK TO THE CRISIS AT **HAND**, PLEASE? WHAT ARE WE GOING TO DO ABOUT THE ARABIANS?

RIGHT NOW WE COULDN'T TAKE THEIR SLAVES AWAY IF WE **WANTED**.

MR. SINBAD'S AN OFFICIAL **AMBASSADOR**. DOESN'T THAT COME WITH SOME KIND OF **DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY**?

WE NEED SOMEONE WHO CAN TALK TO THEM IN THEIR OWN LANGUAGE.

MOWGLI.

HE'S BUSY. WHO **ELSE** DO WE HAVE?

HE'S GOT TO BE **SMOOTH** AND **DIPLOMATIC**.

THAT LEAVES **YOU** OUT, MR. MAYOR.

I KNOW.

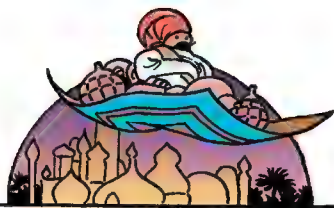
AFTER THE WAY YOU SCREAMED AT SINBAD, THEY'D BE LIKELY TO KILL YOU ON SIGHT!

I **KNOW!**

OOH, **HERE'S** SOMEONE. HE EVEN HAS THE LANGUAGE. BUT WE'LL PROBABLY HAVE TO DRAG HIM OUT OF THE **BRANSTOCK** AND SOBER HIM **UP** FIRST.

WHO?

YOU'RE NOT GOING TO LIKE IT.



SIRRAH, THIS KIND OF BEHAVIOR FROM THE INFIDELS IS **NOT** TO BE TOLERATED!

GIVE ME THE WORD, MASTER, AND I WILL AVENGE THIS INSULT TO YOU.

I CAN SLIT A THOUSAND THROATS THIS NIGHT WITHOUT DISTURBING ANYONE'S SLEEP.

NO, LOYAL HAKIM, THAT WON'T DO.



I'VE VISITED **COUNTLESS** STRANGE LANDS IN MY MANY TRAVELS. I'VE HAD TO LEARN TO ENDURE THE MANY ALIEN CUSTOMS OF BARBARIANS ACROSS THE WORLDS.

WE GOT OFF TO A BAD START, BUT WE'LL LEARN HOW TO TALK TO THIS PRINCE CHARMING OF THEIRS.



IT WON'T BE **ME**, LORD SINBAD. I DON'T SPEAK JACKAL.

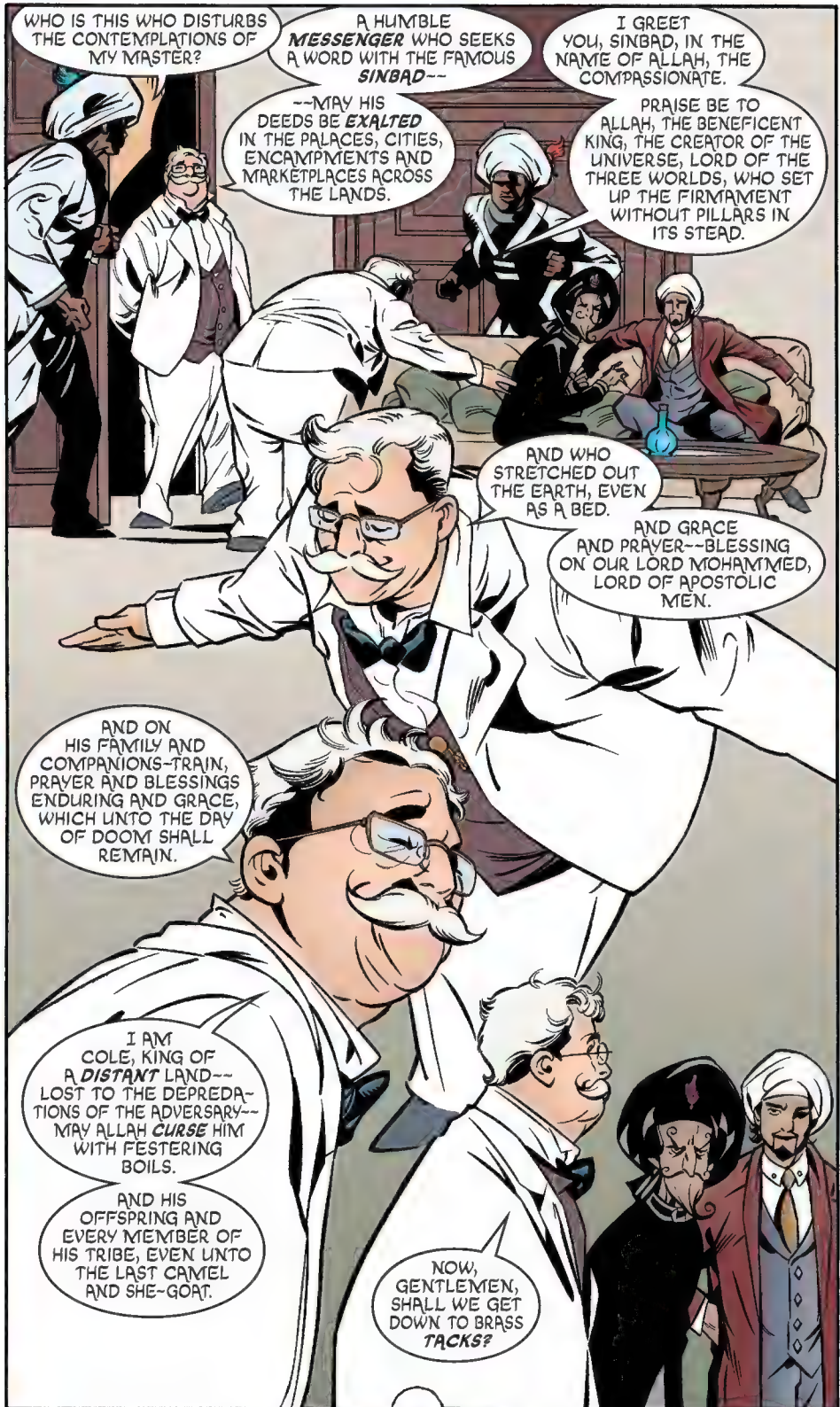
AH, YUSUF, YOU'RE A DOUR ONE, BUT YOU DO FIND WAYS TO AMUSE ME.



NO, I WAS THINKING IT MIGHT BE TIME TO UNSEAL OUR SPECIAL **FRIEND** HERE. THERE'S NO LANGUAGE BARRIER HIS MAGICS CAN'T OVERCOME.

KNOCK KNOCK

THE DOOR, MASTER, I'LL GET IT.



WHO IS THIS WHO DISTURBS THE CONTEMPLATIONS OF MY MASTER?

A HUMBLE MESSENGER WHO SEEKS A WORD WITH THE FAMOUS SINBAD--

I GREET YOU, SINBAD, IN THE NAME OF ALLAH, THE COMPASSIONATE.

--MAY HIS DEEDS BE EXALTED IN THE PALACES, CITIES, ENCAMPMENTS AND MARKETPLACES ACROSS THE LANDS.

PRaise BE TO ALLAH, THE BENEFICENT KING, THE CREATOR OF THE UNIVERSE, LORD OF THE THREE WORLDS, WHO SET UP THE FIRMAment WITHOUT PILLARS IN ITS STEAD.

AND WHO STRETCHED OUT THE EARTH, EVEN AS A BED.

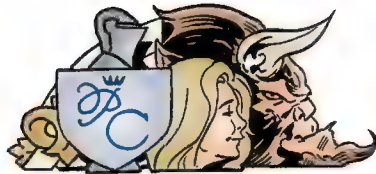
AND GRACE AND PRAYER--BLESSING ON OUR LORD MOHAMMED, LORD OF APOSTOLIC MEN.

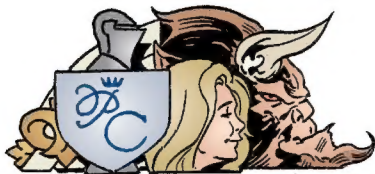
AND ON HIS FAMILY AND COMPANIONS--TRAIN, PRAYER AND BLESSINGS ENDURING AND GRACE, WHICH UNTO THE DAY OF DOOM SHALL REMAIN.

I AM COLE, KING OF A DISTANT LAND-- LOST TO THE DEPREDATIONS OF THE ADVERSARY-- MAY ALLAH CURSE HIM WITH FESTERING BOILS.

AND HIS OFFSPRING AND EVERY MEMBER OF HIS TRIBE, EVEN UNTO THE LAST CAMEL AND SHE-GOAT.

NOW, GENTLEMEN, SHALL WE GET DOWN TO BRASS TACKS?





ROUGH DAY, HUH?

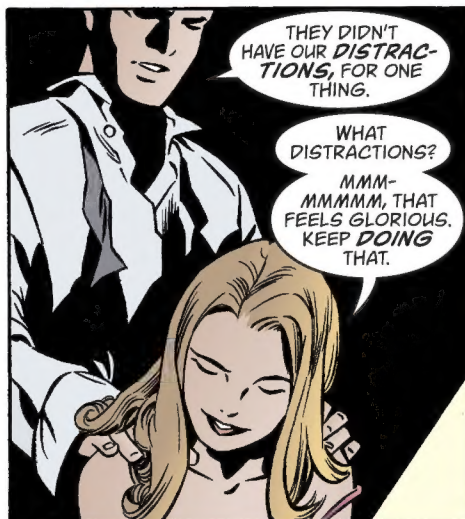
TELL ME ABOUT IT. YOU CAME THROUGH LIKE A TROUPER THOUGH, EVEN WHEN I SNAPPED AT YOU EARLIER.

I'M SORRY ABOUT THAT.



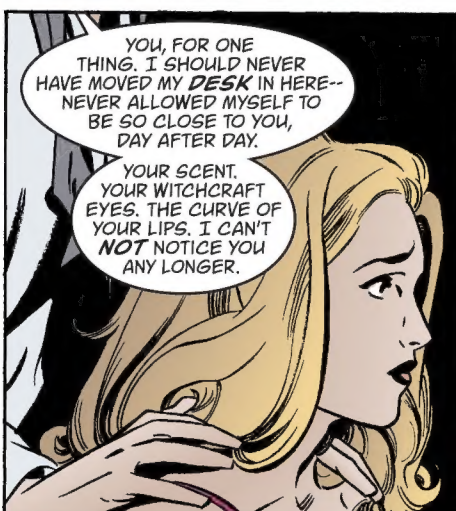
THAT'S OKAY. I WAS DONE BEING MAD AT YOU HOURS AGO. WE'RE ALL TOO TIRED AND TOO CRANKY THESE DAYS.

GOD HELP ME, I'D TURN IT ALL BACK OVER TO SNOW AND KING COLE IN A SECOND. I DON'T KNOW HOW THEY MANAGED IT.



THEY DIDN'T HAVE OUR **DISTRACTIONS**, FOR ONE THING.

WHAT DISTRACTIONS?
MMM-
MMMMM, THAT FEELS GLORIOUS. KEEP DOING THAT.



YOU, FOR ONE THING. I SHOULD NEVER HAVE MOVED MY **DESK** IN HERE-- NEVER ALLOWED MYSELF TO BE SO CLOSE TO YOU, DAY AFTER DAY.

YOUR SCENT. YOUR WITCHCRAFT EYES. THE CURVE OF YOUR LIPS. I CAN'T **NOT** NOTICE YOU ANY LONGER.



BEAUTY ISN'T A GOOD ENOUGH NAME FOR YOU. IT'S TOO **SMALL** A WORD TO DESCRIBE EVERYTHING THAT MAKES UP--

UHM, **EXCUSE** ME, BOSS, IT'S LATE AND I SHOULD **REALLY** BE GETTING TO BED.

GOOD IDEA, BUT ONE THING FIRST--



SOMETHING WE'VE **BOTH** WANTED TO DO FOR MONTHS NOW.



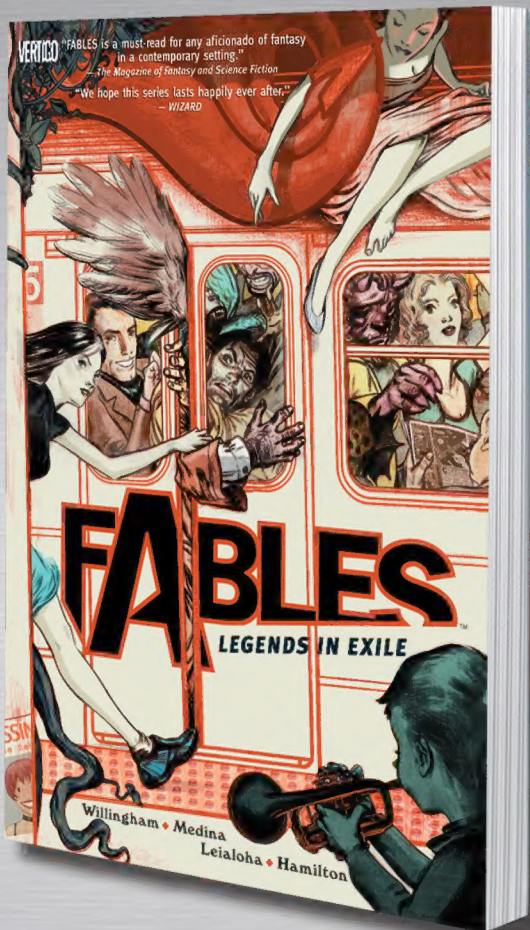
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BILL WILLINGHAM

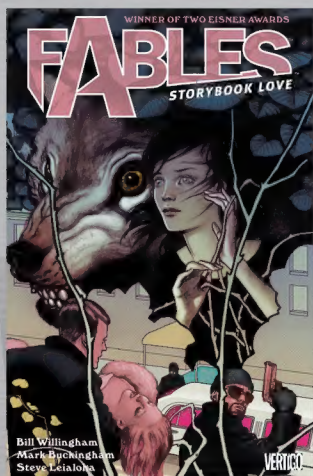
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- VOL. 6: HOMELANDS
- VOL. 7: ARABIAN NIGHTS (AND DAYS)
- VOL. 8: WOLVES
- VOL. 9: SONS OF EMPIRE
- VOL. 10: THE GOOD PRINCE
- VOL. 11: WAR AND PIECES
- VOL. 12: THE DARK AGES
- VOL. 13: THE GREAT FABLES CROSSOVER
- 1001 NIGHTS OF SNOWFALL



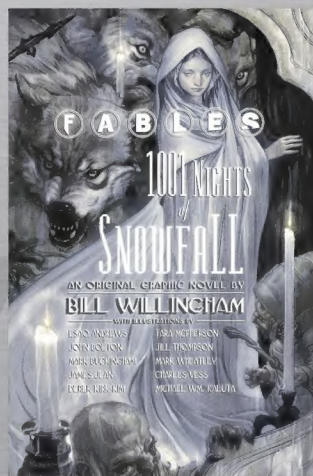
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